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New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Japan	Mr. Kodama
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/550)

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/550)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Guinea-Bissau, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Mutaboba to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall also take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations, in which he requests that the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Sebastião Isata, be invited to participate in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to him under rule 39.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Isata to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2010/550, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti and His Excellency Mr. Sebastião Isata. I would like to remind the briefers to keep their remarks to 10 minutes, and I shall hold them to that time limit.

I now give the floor to Mr. Joseph Mutaboba.

Mr. Mutaboba: In my presentation today, I will focus mainly on the most recent political and security developments, as well as on efforts by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and partners to help materialize ongoing plans by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), in addition to bilateral and other multilateral partners, in support of the nationally-owned holistic approach to security sector reform and efforts to protect and stabilize key State institutions and sustain a genuine and inclusive political dialogue among and within the leadership and opposition in Guinea-Bissau.

Following the seventh working session of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, held on 24 September in New York, and the subsequent

publication of the letter addressed by President Malam Bacai Sanhá to the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, intensive consultations have taken place in the subregion with a view to reaching consensus on the scope, modalities and timing for the finalization and implementation of the joint CPLP-ECOWAS partnership. The Secretary of State for External Relations of Angola, Mr. George Chikoti, undertook a visit to Abuja, Nigeria, in mid-October for consultations with the ECOWAS Commission on the way forward. He subsequently visited several capitals in the subregion to further discuss practical arrangements for assisting the Government of Guinea-Bissau within the framework of the joint CPLP-ECOWAS partnership.

In that context, I met last week in Luanda with President José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, who informed me of his support for the activation of a joint technical security sector reform task force, comprising ECOWAS, CPLP, the African Union and the United Nations, in order to enhance coordination and facilitate resource mobilization efforts for priority security sector reform activities. The work of such an inter-agency task force would fit naturally within ongoing initiatives, such as the continuous and multidimensional support that UNIOGBIS is providing to the nationally-owned security sector reform coordination mechanisms. That move is consistent with the recommendations made in the last communiqué of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau and with the views expressed by the national authorities of Guinea-Bissau, who insist that the proposed partnership between CPLP and ECOWAS should be closely coordinated and supported by the United Nations.

Under current plans, the proposed road map put together in August by the Chiefs of Defence Staff of ECOWAS and Angola — in the name of CPLP — is aligned with the existing national strategic framework for security sector reform of Guinea-Bissau and provides for the protection of members of key national institutions, as well for training and mentoring of defence forces and members of police institutions. It should be recalled that police institutions are already supported bilaterally by partners such as Portugal and Brazil, as well as by UNIOGBIS. Angola has, for its part, prepared plans to also assist with further training activities and the rehabilitation of some of the infrastructure of the defence forces and security institutions, including the training academy of Cumere, where the training of the elements to be retained in the armed forces will be carried out.

Once the endorsement of the joint CPLP-ECOWAS framework of assistance to Guinea-Bissau is finalized by national and regional partners, UNIOGBIS will be prepared to present a comprehensive briefing to the Security Council detailing the proposed modalities, timing and resources related to the implementation of the framework. The national authorities of Guinea-Bissau are of the view that formal support from the Security Council for that initiative would be crucial. That position is shared by the leadership of CPLP, ECOWAS and the African Union. However, it is crucial to ensure that the political, technical and financial support extended by regional partners and the United Nations to Guinea-Bissau authorities produces tangible results within a defined timeline and is not perceived as an open-ended commitment. In other words, such support should be based on clear benchmarks to measure progress. In addition, the authorities should show clear signs of commitment to restructuring the armed forces and revitalizing their leadership.

In that context, support for the security sector reform priorities, including the pension fund and capacity-building initiatives, is urgent. I therefore strongly encourage all interested partners to boost their support to security sector reform priorities in Guinea-Bissau within a multilateral and/or bilateral framework, as an urgent means to help consolidate peace and stability in the country and promote good governance and sustainable development.

The non-implementation of the recent decision by the Supreme Military Court to release from detention the former Chief of Defense Staff, Vice Admiral Zamora Induta, demonstrates the continued predominance of the military leadership over the judiciary, and to some extent the executive. It will undoubtedly increase the reluctance of some international partners to engage with the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, as it underlines the lack of civilian oversight over the armed forces and the existing environment of impunity in the country. Urgent actions should therefore be taken by the national authorities of Guinea-Bissau to demonstrate their resolve to fight impunity and promote national reconciliation.

With regard to the establishment of a genuine political dialogue within the leadership of Guinea-Bissau, I am pleased to report that, on 14 October, President Malam Bacai Sanhá and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior met with the diplomatic community in Bissau as part of our efforts on the ground to engage the two leaders on issues of crucial interest for the stability of the country and to help them overcome alleged mistrust between them. Furthermore, in recent weeks, divisions within the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde have continued to deepen. Against that background, I will continue to use my good offices, with the support of international partners in Bissau, to ensure that the two leaders stay the course in fulfilling their commitment to the stabilization of the country.

Meanwhile, with regard to the investigations into the March and June 2009 political assassinations, UNIOGBIS has continued to insist, along with the Office of the Prosecutor General, that any assistance from international partners to complete the investigations had to be linked to a commitment by national institutions to jointly assess the credibility and transparency of the investigation process conducted so far.

Let me now turn to the issue of the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. The Council will recall that in recent months I strongly advocated for a holistic response, involving not only transit countries like Guinea-Bissau but also countries of origin and destination. I am encouraged to note that in recent weeks, and in particular during a visit I undertook to Europe in September, a number of partners have demonstrated interest in engaging in more robust strategies to tackle illicit drug trafficking and organized crime.

We are also exploring with the national authorities a memorandum of understanding that would allow vessels from international partners to conduct policing activities in the territorial waters of Guinea-Bissau — similar to those conducted in Cape Verde and Senegal — with the collaboration of trained police officers and including the strengthening and enhancement of national structures to counter transnational crime, notably drug trafficking and organized crime.

Lastly, I continue to advocate for interested partners to extend their assistance to Guinea-Bissau in terms of equipment for airports, ports and borders, to enhance control and deterrence in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. Let me stress, however, that regional actors face significant difficulties in collecting reliable statistics and evidence of drug trafficking activities. Hopefully, with the establishment of transnational crime units in support of ECOWAS plans to curb drug trafficking, the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative will help improve such a situation.

I am pleased to confirm that in Guinea-Bissau the legal, political and operational conditions for the establishment of a transnational crime unit have been met. UNIOGBIS has the capacity to follow up on this process, in close collaboration with international and national partners. However, more robust action from the international community is still needed — for example, to name and shame entities involved in those activities and to pass legislation to allow the freeze or confiscation of assets and bank accounts, which could help deter and combat such destabilizing phenomena. Other mechanisms to further enhance data collection and information-sharing at regional and international levels could possibly be considered.

Although Guinea-Bissau has seen a series of setbacks, which have contributed to the increased feeling of frustration among some international partners, there have nevertheless been some positive steps and developments that are worth mentioning without going into detail. The national authorities were able to flush out ghost civil servants by adopting a new salary payment method. Salaries are paid regularly. The national reconciliation and dialogue conference process was launched on 19 August. The national justice system policy was adopted. The national Security Sector Reform Steering Committee has resumed its work. And our offices have co-located with the Secretariat, which is a boost.

An understanding between the President and the Prime Minister led to an official request for assistance in the fight against drug trafficking in a letter that the Secretary-General has received and that I trust will be forwarded to the Council. The pension fund legislative framework has been finalized and security sector reform legislative packages approved. Progress has been made on police reform, including the vetting of police officers and the construction of a model police station. And the African Union has established a

permanent presence in Bissau, whose representative is here today.

In closing, and as stated in the report before the Council, if endorsed, the CPLP-ECOWAS road map, together with the pledges already made by CPLP member States for assistance in the areas of holistic security sector reform, should contribute to enhancing the protection of State institutions and increased civilian oversight over military structures. This partnership should also help create conditions for the implementation of critical aspects of the security sector reform programme, including the retirement, reinsertion and reintegration of military personnel, including former combatants, and the fight against impunity, drug trafficking and organized crime. Hopefully, if well articulated and coordinated, it should create conditions for the renewed commitment of donors and other key partners to continue to support the economic reforms and debt relief programmes for Guinea-Bissau.

This emerging momentum has reopened a window of opportunity for enhanced collaboration between the international community and the leadership of Guinea-Bissau following months of impasse. UNIOGBIS, under my leadership, will continue to ensure that this opportunity is not missed.

The President: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Viotti.

Mrs. Viotti: I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I extend a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Joseph Mutaboba for his remarks and his work as head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. I also extend a very warm welcome to the representative of the African Union to Guinea-Bissau.

The events of 1 April and the Government's response to them raised concerns in the international community. Guinea-Bissau's partners believe that it is important for the country to show stronger commitment to the principle of civilian control of the military, the fight against drug trafficking and effective reform of the security sector. At the same time, there seems to be consensus that continued engagement with Guinea-Bissau is necessary to assist the country in building democratic governance and effectively addressing key challenges. What is needed now is to identify the kind of support that the international community can provide under the current circumstances to help enhance national political stability, promote reconciliation and combat impunity and organized crime.

During the past few months, the Peacebuilding Commission has sought to remain engaged with Guinea-Bissau on the basis of the principle of mutual accountability. We have attempted to clearly convey to the authorities the need to effectively and promptly address some issues of grave concern to the international community, while reiterating our willingness to continue to support the country in its efforts towards political stability and socioeconomic development.

On 16 July, the country-specific configuration held a meeting in New York with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Adelino Mano Queta. On that occasion, he reiterated that security sector reform was his Government's top priority and the only way to achieve stability in the country. He also deplored the scourge of drug trafficking. He indicated that his country cannot address these problems by itself and requested the continued support of the international community. Members of the configuration expressed their concern with the events of 1 April, the continued detention of Admiral Zamora Induta and other officers, as well as with subsequent appointments in the military. They stressed the need for civilian control of the armed forces. Members also emphasized the need to stay engaged with Guinea-Bissau and extend to it the necessary support in an atmosphere of mutual accountability.

Other initiatives are also noteworthy. Bilateral meetings, consultations with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and a meeting of the International Contact Group have discussed the situation in Guinea-Bissau and possible avenues for international engagement.

Security sector reform continues to be critical to addressing the recurrent political instability in the country and strengthening civilian control over the

armed forces. At the same time, efforts in this area cannot ignore the current circumstances. A reflection is currently under way as to how we can best help Guinea-Bissau move forward in security sector reform at this juncture. In any case, it will be important to continue to support regional efforts conducted by ECOWAS and CPLP, as was just described by Mr. Mutaboba.

Another issue of grave concern to the members of the PBC is drug trafficking. An effective fight against illegal drugs requires functioning State institutions, especially in the areas of justice and security, as well as firm political will. The latter is key to securing the international assistance that Guinea-Bissau needs to increase its national capacity in this domain. Those efforts must be reinforced by a regional approach. We therefore emphasize the importance of the role played by ECOWAS. Also, in this regard, both as individual Governments and collectively, we must all do more and better to support the implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan and the West Africa Coast Initiative.

International efforts to help consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau should not rest solely on security-related cooperation. In order for peace to take hold, the foundations for socio-economic development must be strengthened. We need to support capacity-building and help the country revitalize its economy. At the end of the day, it is a dynamic economy and the creation of job opportunities that will generate the revenues needed to provide basic services to the population and allow the State to function in a sustainable manner.

In spite of the challenges remaining, Guinea-Bissau has made significant progress in managing its economy and promoting development. In 2008 and 2009, export revenues increased and the Government was able to pay civil service salaries on time. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2010/550), tax revenues increased by an impressive 46.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2010. Important infrastructure was completed. With the support of the International Monetary Fund, Guinea-Bissau has advanced fiscal management in a way that is expected to lead the country towards the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) completion point. I invite all concerned parties, including the Peacebuilding Fund, to reaffirm, in concrete terms, their support for that goal.

Despite the recurring challenges, we must persevere in our collective efforts to support Guinea-Bissau. That requires that international partners look beyond current setbacks and support long-term political and economic stability. It also means that the national authorities, including the military, must fully restore international confidence.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sebastiao Isata.

Mr. Isata: I would like, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to express, on behalf of the African Union (AU), my sincere gratitude for the opportunity given us to join this important meeting on Guinea-Bissau. Personally, I am honoured to address the Council for the first time in my present capacity. We attach great significance to this engagement within the context of the growing partnership between the African Union and the Security Council, and with the United Nations as a whole.

Once again, the Security Council is called on to assume the responsibility for which it was established: the maintenance of international peace and security. Today, we gather to continue our efforts on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, a country that has been living in a cycle of political instability for decades, a result of the weakness of the State institutions and legal system, particularly the administration of criminal justice.

We are grateful for the comprehensive briefing provided by the colleagues who preceded me. I will be very brief in discussing just a few points, from our point of view, concerning the situation on the ground.

As a result of the absence of the effective rule of law and the spread of drug trafficking, corruption and poverty — which have been pervasive there for many years — Guinea-Bissau has experienced decades of instability. The African Union, to strengthen its efforts to help bring an end to that chronic problem and restore constitutional normality, decided to open a permanent office in Guinea-Bissau, as a first step in the development of a joint stabilization mission of the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), pursuant to the decision of the Assembly of the African Union at its special session held in August 2009 in Tripoli, Libya.

We are pleased to note at this juncture that, despite all the difficulties it faces, Guinea-Bissau has shown encouraging signs regarding the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the African Union and the international community. Those signs can be summarized as follows.

President Malam Bacai Sanhá and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior made a commitment to end their differences, expressed on 14 October before the diplomatic corps following AU-United Nations efforts on the ground. On that same occasion, an official announcement was made of their decision to accept deployment of a joint AU-ECOWAS stabilization mission, with a mandate for further peacebuilding and stability, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development, in conformity with the Tripoli Plan of Action adopted by the African Union Assembly on 21 August 2009. Guinea-Bissau's Parliament accepted the African Union proposal aimed at passing legislation criminalizing the trafficking, possession, transfer and processing of drugs. The judicial branch showed its determination to continue and effectively conclude the criminal investigation into the murders perpetrated in March and June 2009. The Guinea-Bissau authorities accepted the African Union proposal for the creation of a truth and national reconciliation commission as the last stage of the forthcoming National Reconciliation Conference. And Guinea-Bissau's Government obtained positive results in its implementation of the recommendations of the Bretton Woods institutions.

On the issue of drug trafficking, despite the legal measures to be adopted, the creation and training of a special rapid-deployment police force with modern equipment is imperative. The Truth and National Reconciliation Commission is intended to bring moral reparation for the injury done to the relatives of victims of the various crimes that occurred in recent years in Guinea-Bissau, and to launch genuine national reconciliation among the people of Guinea-Bissau. However, it is important to point out that the Commission must not be seen as a substitute for the legal measures already in progress.

Considering the positive signs that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau have shown, the African Union believes that holding a donors conference for the country will constitute an incentive for efforts to reform the defence and security sectors — a cornerstone in promoting democracy, the rule of law and good governance. The conference will also contribute to alleviating the pervasive poverty that Guinea Bissau-faces, another cause and source of instability.

In the interdependent world of today, prosperity and stability are indivisible concepts. Today, we are confronted with the choice of continuing our commitment to supporting the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau, a nation in despair, or abandoning it to an unknown fate. However, it is important to note that the path we choose to follow will constitute the standard by which the future will assess our efforts. We are confident that the Security Council's more than 60-year experience, coupled with increasing mobilization of other actors for international peace and security around the world, will provide a rich and solid base from which we can draw innovative ideas for supporting the efforts of the people and Government of Guinea-Bissau to restore lasting peace and security in their country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time that I take the floor in the Security Council in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of November. I would also like to express our gratitude to Council members for the understanding they have shown towards my country, which has been on the Council's agenda for a little more than 12 years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/550) and the particular attention he has been devoting to my country, Guinea-Bissau. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Mutaboba; the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Sebastião da Silva Isata; and the Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's configuration for Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Maria Luiza Viotti, for their presentations and the excellent work they have been carrying out for Guinea-Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau has experienced some difficult times over the past 12 years as a result, among other things, of our now-concluded struggle for liberation and the lack of adequate means to support those men

and women who, through their great determination, ensured our country's sovereignty. Because of them, we can stand before you today as representatives of a legitimate State.

Many of those men and women, our former freedom fighters, are fearful of being abandoned, as happened in the past, and are thus still active as soldiers, despite their advanced age that prevents them from serving effectively in the army.

This situation is compounded by the country's enormous economic and financial difficulties and by the lack of adequate infrastructure and factories, in particular for processing commodities such as cashew nuts, for which there is significant global demand. These nuts are mostly processed in India without any added value for my country, thus depriving our youth, who make up over 60 per cent of the population, of employment opportunities.

To remedy the situation, our State institutions are trying to reform the national army and adapt it to the requirements for a modern army, one that is entirely subservient to political authority, in conformity with the rule of law. That was stated by our President, His Excellency Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, during his speech on 25 September 2010 at the open debate of the General Assembly, as follows:

> "The reform that we desire in our defence and security sector, for which we have sought international assistance, has become a matter of prime urgency and extreme sensitivity." (A/65/PV.16)

Despite the events of 1 April, which were promptly condemned by the legitimate authorities of the country and by the entire international community, Guinea-Bissau continues to seek a path towards political stability.

In this respect, we are planning an international reconciliation conference, to be held next year, which should allow all political and military stakeholders, as well as civil society, in Guinea-Bissau to explore ways to build peace in the country. We must note here that that initiative is supported by the main political, military and religious leaders and by civil society.

I would also like to mention that the Government has undertaken substantial work to continue to strengthen its credibility with the international financial institutions through appropriate reforms and by demonstrating great budgetary discipline, in order to achieve, by the end of 2010, the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Thanks to improvements in the management of public finances, which have brought about positive economic results, salaries are being paid on a regular basis, thus defusing the social tensions that prevailed previously.

Guinea-Bissau remains determined to fight drug trafficking relentlessly, including by adopting laws that criminalize the possession, transfer and processing of drugs and that strengthen the capacities of the police and judiciary, while recalling that this effort must be a regional undertaking. In that connection, we would not deny that substantial progress has been made, despite the very limited logistical means and the geography of the country, which is an isolated area that includes over 80 islands in the Bijagós Archipelago.

In this regard, we welcome the decision taken at the summit of heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Praia, Cape Verde, in July 2010. That decision called on the Community's Commission to study, together with the European Union and other relevant partners, all of the synergies that would enable an immediate implementation of the ECOWAS regional plan of action to combat the scourge of drug trafficking.

I must also highlight the visits undertaken by the civilian and military leaders of the country to Brazil to seek technical military assistance; to Angola to strengthen relations in the economic, defence and security areas; and to Cuba, to strengthen bilateral relations.

In that context and as the Secretary-General did in his report, we would like to commend the joint efforts by ECOWAS, under the Nigerian presidency, and by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), under the Angolan presidency, aimed at adopting a common plan of action to provide assistance to our country, as recently requested by our President.

We are very confident that, with the new ECOWAS/CPLP partnerships and the implementation of the road map recently adopted by the ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff, which will shortly be endorsed by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, the stabilization

mission that will be sent primarily to provide training and support peacebuilding and stability, and efforts to promote reconstruction and post-conflict development, it will become possible for the country to be definitively stabilized and for it to be able to focus on sustainable development.

We are aware that the primary responsibility for development and stability in the country falls on the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves, but, despite the Government's efforts, our country remains dependent on international solidarity, assistance and cooperation. We find ourselves faced with the inescapable and urgent need to reform our defence and security sectors. A pension fund is needed for those sectors in order to adequately compensate those who fought for our freedom and enable them to return home once and for all.

Beyond that reform, we also need a wider reform, in particular one targeting the public administration aimed at providing our public services with the means to deal with the many challenges we face in terms of development and stability. In that regard, the Government remains committed to holding a high-level meeting and a roundtable discussion for donors. This was initially planned for 2010 but unfortunately could not be held, given the tragic events of 1 April.

Our country has an area of a little over 36,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 1.6 million. If our partners wake up tomorrow and decide to bolster the work of the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, CPLP and other partners on the ground, Guinea-Bissau will soon become a stable and developed country that no longer needs to be on the agenda of the Council.

We thank our development partners, including the European Union, ECOWAS, CPLP, the African Union, the United Nations, Angola, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, the People's Republic of China and others, for everything they have been doing to help us. Now is the time to help us more, so that we can hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

We would therefore like to reiterate our call to all our partners to continue in the same spirit of friendship, solidarity and cooperation with the people and democratic institutions of Guinea-Bissau. Just as President Sanhá stated during the general debate of the General Assembly, "it is now, in our current circumstances, that our country most needs such support." (A/65/PV.16) This is indeed the time when Guinea-Bissau needs sustainable investment and work in the political, development and security areas, and stronger commitments by the entire international community to be able to fulfil the aspirations of its people and its legitimate authorities.

To conclude, I would like to once again take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Council for their continuing interest in and commitment to Guinea-Bissau and convey to them once again my country's gratitude for resolution 1876 (2009), which established the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, under the wise leadership of Ambassador Joseph Mutaboba, enabling our country to benefit from the focused assistance and support of the United Nations.

The President: I thank Ambassador Da Gama for his contribution this morning.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.